



Protect your health. Prevent disease.

# Lighten up...

*cut portions in half.*

Eating fewer calories by making food portions smaller is one strategy supported by research to achieve and maintain a healthy weight, thus protecting your health and preventing diseases such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and some cancers.

## What is a Portion?

A **portion** is the amount of food you choose to eat. By making your portions smaller, you will eat fewer calories, making it easier to maintain your weight or achieve a healthy weight.

## The Challenge

Currently, portion sizes of pre-packaged, convenience foods have significantly increased over the past two decades in restaurants, grocery stores and vending machines. Current portions of French fries, hamburgers and sodas are 2-5 times larger than when they were originally offered in fast food restaurants. Bigger portions of these convenient foods - which are often high in added fats, sugars and low in nutrients - make it a challenge to eat the right amount of these foods to maintain a healthy weight.

## Avoid Portion-Size Pitfalls

- **Portion control when eating out.** Many restaurants serve more food than one person needs at one meal. Take control of the amount of food that ends up on your plate by splitting an entrée with a friend. Or, ask the wait person for a “to-go” box and wrap up half your meal as soon as it’s brought to the table.
- **Portion control when eating in.** To minimize the temptation of second and third helpings when eating at home, serve the food on individual plates, instead of putting the serving dishes on the table. Keeping the excess food out of reach may discourage overeating.
- **Portion control in front of the TV.** When eating or snacking in front of the TV, put the amount that you plan to eat into a bowl or container instead of eating straight from the package. It’s easy to overeat when your attention is focused on something else.



## Stay Satisfied & Enjoy Your Favorite Foods

Research shows that people get full by the amount of food they eat, not the number of calories they take in. Cut calories in your favorite foods by lowering the amount of fat and or increasing the amount of fiber-rich ingredients, such as vegetables or fruit. Other healthy substitution tips include: filling half your plate with fruits and vegetables at meal times; checking out the number of serving sizes on packaged foods and paying attention to how many total servings are in a container; choosing broth based vegetable soups instead of cream based for a lower fat alternative; choosing crunchy veggies instead of chips at lunch time; choosing fruits and veggies packed in 100% juice rather than syrup, fats, oils, or creamy sauces.

## Still Hungry? Find a Filling Substitute

Be a leader in making it easier to “lighten up” on portion sizes; Make the healthy choice easier for yourself, your family and your community. Eating more fruits and veggies is an easy choice when they are available, affordable, convenient, and taste great. Take time at home, at work, and in your community to support healthy eating. Here are some suggestions:

## Lead the Way!

Be a leader in making it easier to “lighten up” on portion sizes; Make the healthy choice easier for yourself, your family and your community. Eating more fruits and veggies is an easy choice when they are available, affordable, convenient, and taste great. Take time at home, at work, and in your community to support healthy eating. Here are some suggestions:

<b>Home</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use smaller plates, bowls and cups</li><li>• Portion out food into individual serving containers</li></ul>
<b>School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask for smaller package sizes of vending machine items</li><li>• Join (or start) a school wellness team to address portion control where ever food is sold in the school</li></ul>
<b>Work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Set a worksite policy that limits the portion of high fat and sugary foods at meetings and work events</li><li>• Include a healthy option (fruits and vegetables) whenever food is served</li><li>• Ask for smaller portions to be served in your worksite cafeteria or vending</li><li>• Join (or start) a worksite wellness group to address portion control at your worksite</li></ul>
<b>Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask food establishments to offer smaller or ½ portions on the menu</li><li>• Encourage healthy food portions at community events and functions</li></ul>

## Optimize your Health

Reducing portion sizes as a means of consuming less calories is one of six national strategies supported by research to protect health and prevent disease. The other strategies include, being physically active, eating fruits and veggies, breastfeeding, drinking less sugar-sweetened beverages, and watching less TV. To learn more, visit: [www.dhhs.ne.gov/nafh](http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/nafh)

## Resources

[http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy\\_eating/portion\\_size.html](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy_eating/portion_size.html)  
[http://www.smallstep.gov/portion\\_control.html](http://www.smallstep.gov/portion_control.html)  
[http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/nutrition/pdf/portion\\_size\\_research.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/nutrition/pdf/portion_size_research.pdf)

